



FACTSHEET

DELIVERING TECHNOLOGY ACCESS TO AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES



Neighborhood Networks centers make a positive impact in America's communities.

The Road to Self-Sufficiency: Helping Residents Overcome Transportation Barriers

Achieving self-sufficiency requires jobs; to get to those jobs, people need transportation. Gaining and keeping employment are difficult tasks for those who lack adequate transportation. Many residents living in HUD assisted or insured housing in urban areas do not own vehicles and are bound by the limitations of local public transportation.

As more jobs relocate to the suburbs, these urban residents face the challenge of depending on a means of transportation that often does not reach the suburban areas experiencing the most job growth. Additionally, residents are limited by public transportation's hours of operation, which may not correspond to the schedule of many entry-level positions that require evening or other nontypical working hours.

Coordinating the daily requirements of work, childcare, shopping, and errands with the complicated and time-consuming limitations of public transportation is difficult for residents with families. For residents located in rural areas, the challenge is compounded by an absence of public transportation.

Transportation issues affect even senior citizen residents who, although not commuting to the workplace, rely on public transportation for other reasons, such as doctor appointments, shopping, and socializing. The American Association of

Retired Persons (AARP) Public Policy Institute issued a report in 2002 that examines transportation issues faced by Americans age 50 and older.¹ Major concerns include worries about public transportation safety, health problems that affect seniors' ability to continue driving, and a limited ability to walk to their destinations because of a variety of health and environmental reasons.

Transportation resources available to Neighborhood Networks centers

Centers interested in providing transportation assistance to their residents should consider some of these opportunities:

- **Transportation Toolbox for Rural Areas and Small Communities.** The U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Transportation (DOT) have joined together to provide information to rural communities trying to eliminate the transportation barriers their residents face. Funding options included in this toolbox are rural economic development loans and grants from USDA and DOT's rural initiatives sponsored by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). ntl.bts.gov/ruraltransport/toolbox

¹ Source: *Understanding Senior Transportation: Report and Analysis of a Survey of Consumers Age 50+, AARP*, March 2002. www.aarp.org/research/housing-mobility/transportation/Articles/aresearch-import-743-2002-04.html.




- **National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP).** This Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program provides state and local information on funding and resources available to rural areas seeking to improve their transportation infrastructure. Included on RTAP's Web site is its resource catalog, a searchable database of transportation-related print and multimedia materials. www.nationalrtap.org
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work (WtW) funds.** FTA provides a helpful online factsheet of options available through the combined effort of DOT and the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Labor (DOL). In addition to information on funding resources, its Web site includes information on innovative ways that state and local programs are addressing the transportation issue using TANF and WtW funding. www.fta.dot.gov/9392_8067_ENG_HTML.htm
- **United We Ride.** This five-part initiative—sponsored by DOT in a partnership with HHS, DOL, and the U.S. Department of Education—includes state and local support to help eliminate transportation barriers, encourage partnerships, and deliver new opportunities to anyone who needs transportation assistance. www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/index.html

Partnership options available to Neighborhood Networks centers

Centers can also meet transportation needs by forming creative partnerships and seeking funding from some obvious and not-so-obvious sources. Beyond federal, state, and local government assistance, centers should consider forming community partnerships with:

- Public housing authorities.
- Local transit authorities.
- Businesses.
- Social service agencies.
- Senior citizen centers.
- School districts.
- Churches or other faith-based organizations.
- Banks.
- Car dealerships.

Centers may also find that joining with other centers in their state to start a consortium will make forming partnerships and pursuing transportation funding and assistance easier and more profitable for all involved. 

For more information, contact:

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Copies of this factsheet are available in Spanish and can be requested from the Neighborhood Networks toll-free information center at (888) 312-2743.